



NEWS RELEASE

Office of the United States Attorney
Eastern District of Texas

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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FEDS ANNOUNCE MAJOR METH BUST IN TYLER

(Tyler, TX) A combined task force of federal, state and local law enforcement agents have begun arresting individuals involved in a major methamphetamine ring in Tyler and east Texas. Law enforcement officers began executing nineteen federal arrest warrants and six federal search warrants today charging defendants with possession with intent to distribute more than 10 kilograms of methamphetamine. The warrants are being served in Tyler, Smith County, and the state of Florida. The 26 count federal indictment was returned by the Grand Jury yesterday in Tyler. According to information presented by prosecutors, an investigation began in October, 2004 into the distribution of "ice" methamphetamine in east Texas, Louisiana, and Florida. During this time, the investigation resulted in 22 undercover drug purchases; the purchase or seizure of fifteen handguns; the seizure of approximately four pounds of methamphetamine "ice" and small amounts of marijuana and pharmaceutical drugs; and the seizure of three vehicles. Authorities determined that **SIMON BALDERAS, Jr.** 28, of Tyler, was heavily involved in the organization.

Matthew D. Orwig, United States Attorney for the Eastern District of Texas,

was pleased with the results of the round-up, “This investigation dubbed, Operation Icebox, underlines the commitment of our federal, local, and state law enforcement to work together to rid our communities of those who would sell poison to our children.”[]

It is anticipated that the warrants executed today will develop evidence that could bring about additional indictments or arrests.

“The arrests made today are a great example of community policing. Agents of the DEA and ATF combined their efforts with state and local law enforcement to take back our crime infested neighborhoods. This investigation and the resulting arrests will be instrumental in removing these traffickers from our community that have been responsible for the distribution and transportation of multiple kilograms of methamphetamine “ice” over a three state area. The success of the operation today is a direct result of the positive relationship between local, state and federal law enforcement all working toward a common goal---a safer community,” said Gary G. Olenkiewicz, DEA’s Special Agent in Charge.

It is important to note all defendants are presumed innocent until proven guilty beyond a reasonable doubt in a court of law. A Grand Jury indictment is not evidence of guilt.

If convicted, the defendants face from up to 40 years to life in federal prison.

The cases are being investigated by the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives, the Drug Enforcement Administration, the U.S. Marshals Service, the Texas Department of Public Safety, the Tyler Police Department, the Smith County Sheriff’s Office and the Henderson Police Department. The cases are being prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorneys William Baldwin and Mary Ann Cozby.

Background Information Re: Methamphetamine

Methamphetamine

(Amphetamine, dextroamphetamine, methamphetamine, and their various salts are collectively referred to as amphetamines. In fact, their chemical properties and actions are so similar that even experienced users have difficulty knowing which drug they have taken. Methamphetamine is the most commonly abused.)

Street terms for methamphetamine: Meth, poor man's cocaine, crystal meth, ice, glass, speed¹

What Does Methamphetamine Look Like?

- Typically meth is a white powder that easily dissolves in water.
- Another form of meth, in clear chunky crystals, called crystal meth, or ice.
- Meth can also be in the form of small, brightly colored tablets. The pills are often called by their Thai name, yaba.

What are the methods of usage?

- Injecting
- Snorting
- Smoking
- Oral ingestion ²

Who uses methamphetamine and amphetamines?

- During 2000, 4% of the U.S. population reported trying methamphetamine at least once in their lifetime.³
- Abuse is concentrated in the western, southwestern, and midwestern United States.

How do methamphetamine and amphetamines get to the United States?

- Clandestine laboratories in California and Mexico are the primary sources of supply for methamphetamine available in the United States.
- Domestic labs that produce methamphetamine are dependent on supplies of the precursor chemical pseudoephedrine, which is sometimes diverted from legitimate sources. It is smuggled from Canada, and to a lesser extent from Mexico.
- Domestic independent laboratory operators, mostly in the western, southwestern, and midwestern United States, also produce and distribute methamphetamine but on a smaller scale.
- Yaba (meth in tablet form) is most often produced in Southeast Asia and sent by mail or courier to the United States.⁴

How much do methamphetamine and amphetamines cost?

- Prices for methamphetamine vary throughout different regions of the United States.
- At the distribution level, prices range from \$3,500 per pound in parts of California and Texas to \$21,000 per pound in southeastern and northeastern regions of the country. Retail prices range from \$400 to \$3,000 per ounce.⁵

What are some consequences of methamphetamine and amphetamine use?

- Effects of usage include addiction, psychotic behavior, and brain damage .⁶
- Withdrawal symptoms include depression, anxiety, fatigue, paranoia, aggression, and intense cravings.⁷
- Chronic use can cause violent behavior, anxiety, confusion, insomnia, auditory hallucinations, mood disturbances, delusions, and paranoia.⁸
- Damage to the brain cause by meth usage is similar to Alzheimer's disease, stroke, and epilepsy.⁹

¹Office of National Drug Control Policy, ***Street Terms: Drugs and the Drug Trade***.²Drug Enforcement

Administration, ***The Forms Of Methamphetamine***, April 2002³Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services

Administration, ***Summary of Findings from the 2000 National Household Survey on Drug Abuse***,

September 2001.⁴Drug Enforcement Administration, ***Drug Trafficking in the United States***, September

2001.⁵Ibid.⁶Office of National Drug Control Policy, ***Drug Facts: Methamphetamine***, May,

2002.⁷Ibid.⁸Ibid.⁹National Institute on Drug Abuse, ***Methamphetamine: Abuse and Addiction***, April, 1998.

What are the Effects of Methamphetamine Abuse?

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